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ABSTRACT

This document presents the standards for school social work created by the National Association of Social Workers (NASW). A total of 33 standards are presented and interpreted. The first 16 standards are classified as standards of competence and professional practice, competence being defined as the synthesis of professional behaviors that integrate knowledge, skills, and activities in the performance of the tasks of school social work, and professional practice referring to the standards of ethics, provision of services, and responsibilities that school social workers are expected to maintain. Standards 17 through 21 are classified as standards of professional preparation and development. These standards relate to the level of training required for school social work practice. Standards 22 through 33 are classified as standards of administrative structure and support. These standards are intended to serve as a guide to the development of both structure and support. A chart of recommended school social worker-student population ratios; lists of knowledge, skills and abilities areas and job dimensions; and a glossary of terms are appended. The document concludes with a summary of major principles from the NASW's Code of Ethics. (NB)

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NASW standards for school social work services

Prepared by the Education Commission Task Force

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June 18, 1992

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Introduction

In 1943, the National Association of Visiting Teachers (NAVT) became the American Association of School Social Workers (AASSW), and in 1955 AASSW merged with six other social work associations to form the National Association of Social Workers (NASW). Thus, school social work has long been a vital part of the social work profession.

In recent years, recognition of the rights of persons with disabilities; changes in the family unit; and the effects of increasing social, economic, and academic pressures on children are some of the forces that have significantly shaped social work services in schools. The value of school social work intervention has increasingly been recognized through legislative initiatives.

In 1978 NASW developed *Standards for Social Work Services in Schools* that have served as guidelines to the development of school social work. Since it is essential that these standards reflect and promote professionally sound practice, they have been revised to reflect changing practices and policies. Revision of these standards has been undertaken for this purpose.

These standards will be met only through the combined efforts of concerned educators, school social workers, and community leaders who are willing to provide the leadership and teamwork that are necessary to ensure high-quality professional services to schools, children, and families.

For many school systems, these standards will reinforce current practices. For others, they will provide a challenge and a goal to be achieved. For school social workers, they both validate the uniqueness and diversity of school social work as a specialty practice area and affirm the value of school social work in enabling children to achieve maximum benefits from their educational experiences.

I. Standards of Competence and Professional Practice

For the purposes of this document, *competence* is defined as the synthesis of professional behaviors that integrate knowledge, skills, and activities in the performance of the tasks of school social work. *Professional practice* relates to the standards of ethics, provision of services, and responsibilities that school social workers are expected to maintain.

The term "local education agency" is used throughout this document to refer to any local or regional public education system and is consistent with the wording of federal legislation.

Standard 1. A school social worker shall demonstrate commitment to the values and ethics of the social work profession and shall use NASW's professional standards and *Code of Ethics* as a guide to ethical decision making.

This commitment is demonstrated through

1. the recognition of basic human rights, including the right of all people to human services;
2. the willingness to accept some degree of personal and professional risk and to act upon professional judgment and convictions; and
3. the recognition that change is constant and requires school social workers to remain current by continuously scrutinizing and improving theory, policy, and practice.

As integral members of the staffs of local education agencies, school social workers have a responsibility to know and comply with federal, state, and local legislation, regulations, and policies, as well as the standards of the social work profession. In the event that conflict arises among competing expectations, school social workers shall be guided by the NASW *Code of Ethics* in ethical decision making.

Standard 2. As leaders or members of interdisciplinary teams, school social workers shall work collaboratively to mobilize the resources of the local education agencies and the community to meet the needs of children and families.

School social workers bring their unique skills and systems perspective to the assessment and diagnosis of children's needs.

As team leaders or members, school social workers initiate and support activities to overcome institutional barriers and gaps in services. School social workers must demonstrate trust, open communication, mutual respect, ongoing collaboration, and effective coordination that facilitate the achievement of the objectives of the interdisciplinary team.

Standard 3. School social workers shall develop and provide training and educational programs that address the goals and mission of the educational institution.

School social workers shall provide in-service training programs for teachers, other personnel of the local education agency, and the staff of community agencies. These programs may involve teamwork and collaboration with other disciplines. The content should address the prevention, intervention, and/or remediation of those factors that affect children's success in school.

Standard 4. School social workers shall organize their time, energies, and work loads to fulfill their responsibilities and complete assignments with due consideration of the priorities among their various responsibilities.

School social workers must manage their work in an efficient and effective manner. Because many local education agencies have insufficient support staff, priorities must be established on the basis of their impact on children's well-being, the availability of other resources, and the social worker's professional skills.

Standard 5. School social workers shall maintain accurate data that are relevant to the planning, management, and evaluation of the school social work program.

The utilization of records and statistics is one way for school social workers to demonstrate their accountability and value to the administration of the local education agency and to the community. Analyses of activity reports, program statistics, and outcome measures can support the utilization and expansion of school social work services to better meet the needs of children and families. Appropriate guidelines of confidentiality must be maintained.

Standard 6. School social workers shall be responsible for identifying individual children and target populations in need of services. They shall do so through a process of needs assessment that includes planned consultation with personnel of the local education agency, community representatives, and children and their families.

Needs assessment is the foundation of effective program planning for children and families. It includes a study of biopsychosocial factors that interfere with children's adjustment to and performance in school. More specifically it involves assessing the following:

1. the child's physical, cognitive, and emotional development and family history;

2. the child's behavior and attitudes in different settings;
3. patterns of interpersonal relationships as observed in the family, local education agency, and community;
4. reports on the child's behavior by teachers and other staff of the local education agency;
5. formal and informal policies of the local education agency and other institutional factors that may affect the child's behavior;
6. patterns of achievement and adjustment at critical points in the child's growth and development; and
7. the existence, accessibility, and utilization of community resources for children and families.

Standard 7. School social workers shall know how to use objective measures and shall integrate them into their evaluation and subsequent development of reports, when appropriate.

School social workers should be skilled in the utilization of various objective measures that are appropriately administered by social workers including measures of adaptive behavior, self-esteem, social skills, attitudes, emotional health, and interests. When they are incorporated into a comprehensive assessment, these measures lend additional support to the school social worker's recommendations.

Standard 8. Following an assessment, the school social worker shall develop and implement a plan of intervention or, when the most suitable intervention is not available, shall develop an alternative plan that will enhance children's ability to benefit from their educational experience.

A plan is based on an assessment that is relevant to the concerns of the referral and includes goals, objectives, and interventions to achieve desired outcomes; methods of evaluation; and outcome criteria. The plan is designed to enhance children's positive educational experiences and involves the family, other team members, and school and community resources as appropriate.

Standard 9. School social workers, as systems change agents, shall identify areas of need that are not being addressed by the local education agency and community and shall work to create those services.

The school social worker will initiate activities to address deficiencies in resources and services of the local education agency or community that affect the ability of groups of children to benefit from the educational system. These activities may include documentation of the problems, presentation

of the problems to the appropriate persons in the local education agency or community, and the promotion of action among educators, other professionals, and citizens. Advocacy for these changes should include work on and leadership of committees and advisory boards at the local, state, regional, and national levels.

Standard 10. School social workers shall provide consultation to personnel of the local education agency, members of school boards, and representatives of the community to promote understanding and the effective utilization of school social work services.

School social workers provide consultation to facilitate the development of an understanding of factors in the home, local education agency, and community that affect the child's educational experience. They also act as consultants on policy matters, including such issues as discipline, suspension, expulsion, attendance, confidentiality, multicultural factors, and child abuse and neglect.

School social workers must be constantly aware of the overall goals, objectives, and tasks of their particular specialty and successfully interpret them to personnel of the local education agency, so that their primary professional activities and competencies are maintained and increased.

Standard 11. School social workers shall ensure that children and their families are provided services within the context of multicultural understanding and sensitivities that enhance the families' support of the children's learning experiences.

Increasing diversity in our nation's classrooms demands that school social workers increase their awareness and appreciation of cultural differences. School social workers must develop cultural competencies that include heightened self-awareness, knowledge, and practice skills. They must also recognize racial and ethnic barriers within the local education agency and develop strategies to lessen and overcome the negative effects of the barriers on children and the climate of the local education agency.

Standard 12. School social work services shall be extended to children in ways that build on the children's individual strengths and that offer them maximum opportunity to participate in the planning and direction of their own learning experiences.

In developing a plan of action, school social workers must consider the characteristics of an individual child and the

capacity of all children to communicate about themselves, to choose among options, and to be involved in directing their own learning.

Standard 13. School social workers shall empower children and their families to gain access to and effectively use formal and informal community resources.

Empowerment is based on the principle of using family strengths and structure to enable families to function as advocates for themselves and their children.

It is particularly appropriate for school social workers to identify and confer with individuals who function as formal or informal leaders in their communities in order to develop and enhance the natural helping networks that can complement the formal services of the local education and community agencies.

Standard 14. School social workers shall maintain adequate safeguards for the privacy and confidentiality of information.

School social workers must be familiar and comply with the various legal mandates related to confidentiality. Professional judgment in the use of confidential information shall be based on legal and ethical considerations. Children, families, and other professionals should be informed of the limitations and requirements of confidentiality when services are initiated.

Standard 15. School social workers shall be trained in and use mediation and conflict-resolution strategies to resolve children's educational problems.

Attempts are often made to resolve conflicts and impasses between parents and the local education agency through formal, costly, and often adversarial due process procedures. Mediation is a structured yet flexible way to clarify issues, work through hidden agendas, and achieve compromises and solutions. Conflict resolution and problem solving in a broader sense are effective strategies that school social workers should use both to undo the results of nonproductive encounters among students, parents, and school and agency personnel and to build positive, collaborative relationships. School social workers are, by training and experience, well suited to these roles and should seek opportunities to engage in these processes.

Standard 16. School social workers shall advocate for children and their families in a variety of situations.

Effective advocacy can best be accomplished when school social workers keep informed about court decisions, legisla-

tion, rules and regulations, and policies and procedures that affect school social work practice. Of particular concern are issues such as suspension and expulsion, institutional racism, discrimination, homophobia, corporal punishment, and sexism. In addition, advocacy should support the needs of immigrants and refugees, homeless people, persons with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection or acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS), substance abusers, and other at-risk populations.

II. Standards of Professional Preparation and Development

Professional preparation and development relate to the level of training required for school social work practice. In addition, the enhancement of knowledge and skills is essential and requires ongoing efforts by school social workers.

STANDARD 17. School social workers shall possess knowledge and understanding that are basic to the social work profession and specialized knowledge and understanding of the local education agency, of the process of education, and of relevant legislation and due process.

Areas of required knowledge are as follows:

A. Human behavior and the social environment, including a variety of theoretical perspectives. Specifically, knowledge in this area involves an understanding of
   1. theories of human growth and development, including learning theory, systems theory, communications theory, social learning theory, and behavioral theory;
   2. cultural, racial, and ethnic diversity;
   3. the needs of at-risk children and children with disabilities; and
   4. biological factors that affect children's ability to function effectively in school.

B. The nature of systematic assessment and investigation and their essential functions in the professional practice of social work. Specifically, knowledge in this area includes an understanding of
   1. methods of gathering data and making inferences from data in order to conduct assessments and plan interventions;
   2. performance objectives and measurable outcomes and the means to assess the effects of intervention;
   3. scientific investigation and the requirements of research designs;
   4. the use of the scholarly literature and research; and

5. the concept of accountability in practice and research.

C. Methods of social work intervention, including an understanding of
   1. the dynamic interaction of knowledge, feelings, attitudes, and behaviors between two or more people that is encompassed in the term "relationship," and the purposeful and professional aspects of social workers' use of relationship and
   2. the basic methods of social work intervention, including counseling, crisis intervention, casework, group work, community organization, consultation, case management, family therapy, and affective education strategies.

D. The organization and structure of the local education agency, particularly an understanding of
   1. systems theory and theories of organizational functioning;
   2. a historical perspective of the purposes of public school education, previous attempts to reform education, and the characteristics of children whom the local education agencies have been expected to serve;
   3. the nature and scope of the authority of the local education agency's board;
   4. a broad view of educational policy issues and problems, including financing of the local education agency;
   5. the politics of school–community relations in shaping educational policy and the effects of different types of school–community power structures;
   6. legislation affecting educational opportunity;
   7. the curriculum and approaches to teaching and learning used in the local education agency;
   8. child and staff subcultures in the local education agency;
   9. roles and areas of competence of various professionals in the local education agency; and
   10. the process of teamwork.

E. Understanding of the characteristics and reciprocal influences of the home, school, and community. This requirement implies comprehension of
   1. family dynamics that have an impact on the child's adjustment in the school and community;
   2. typical and alternative organizational structures, functions, and leadership in the community; and
   3. social welfare policies, programs, and resources in the community.

Standard 18. School social workers shall develop skills for effective service to children, families, personnel of the local education agency, and the community.

Models of school social work practice should be developmental, not static and should use an ecological perspective. Skills required to implement such models include the following:

1. interviewing and other forms of oral and written communication with all persons in the client system;
2. using empathy to develop helping relationships with the diverse persons in the client system;
3. systematically observing and assessing the needs, characteristics, and interactions of children, families, personnel in the local education agency, and individuals and groups in the neighborhood and community;
4. collecting appropriate information to document and assess aspects of the biological, medical, psychological, cultural, sociological, emotional, legal, and environmental factors that affect children's learning;
5. selecting and applying the most effective intervention methods and techniques to enhance the child's educational experience;
6. advocating for the needs of children and families;
7. demonstrating effective leadership of and participation in interdisciplinary teams;
8. providing consultation with families, personnel of the local education agency, and agency and community representatives to achieve common goals;
9. maintaining an effective liaison among families, the local education agency, and the community;
10. making effective referrals to resources in the local education agency and the community;
11. providing case-management services;
12. collaborating with community agencies in school-linked service projects or other programs to solve specific problem situations or to develop new resources for children and their families;
13. identifying and developing resources within and outside the local education agency;
14. coordinating the services of the local education agency and community agency to implement effective intervention programs;
15. administering a work load, including the efficient determination of priorities and the allocation of time for various tasks;
16. conducting research for developing and evaluating programs;

17. assessing the effectiveness of one's interventions;
18. participating in curriculum-development teams;
19. interpreting the effectiveness of social work services to administrators of the local education agency and other appropriate persons;
20. conducting in-service training in areas of social work expertise; and
21. analyzing and influencing policy at the local, state, regional, and national levels.

Standard 19. School social workers shall meet the standards for practice set by NASW, as well as the standards established by the states.

As a distinct specialty within the profession, school social work requires specialized training to work effectively within the educational system. The school social work content may be included within or beyond a program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE).

School social workers shall have a social work degree from a social work program accredited by the CSWE. The School Social Work Specialist credential, established by NASW, is the recommended requirement for school social work practice.

Standard 20. School social workers shall assume responsibility for their own continued professional development.

Because of the changing nature of the fields of social work and education, school social workers have professional responsibility for the continued development of their knowledge and skills and for remaining current in these fields. They should also develop and use support systems that enhance their personal growth and professional identity.

Professional responsibilities include participation and leadership in NASW and other professional associations at the local, state, regional, and national levels; contribution to and participation in staff-development activities and professional conferences; and contributions to and the promotion of professional publications.

Standard 21. School social workers shall contribute to the development of the profession by educating and supervising social work interns.

Field instruction may be provided through the supervision of social work interns in the schools and through the provision of other appropriate learning experiences in relation to social work practice in schools.

III. Standards of Administrative Structure and Support

An effective school social work program must have adequate administrative structure and support. Although NASW recognizes that the local education agency, with state and federal guidance, will dictate the nature and type of organization and support that school social work services receive, these standards are intended to serve as a guide to the development of such structure and support.

Standard 22. School social work services should be provided by credentialed school social workers who are employees of the local education agency as part of integrated services to children.

Local education agencies are responsible for the type and quality of services provided to children. School social work services are best provided by the direct employment of credentialed school social workers.

Because of their specialized knowledge and skills, school social workers should have a role in coordinating and facilitating mental health and social services that are provided in the local education agency by nonagency employees to assure that these services are educationally relevant for children and their families.

Standard 23. Social workers in schools should be designated "school social workers."

"School social worker" is the position title that correctly identifies the person's educational background, profession, and function. Other titles, such as "attendance officer," "pupil personnel worker," "home and school visitor," "home–school coordinator," or "visiting teacher," project incomplete or misleading notions of the school social worker's qualifications and functions.

Standard 24. The administrative structure of the local education agency should show clear lines of support and accountability for the school social work program.

The administrative structure and organization of the local education agency should provide for optimum utilization of the school social work staff and resources. Realistic job descriptions, working conditions, and work load standards are essential. This administrative structure necessitates a mechanism for the regular review of the goals and objectives, their accomplishment, and the essential resources of the school social work program.

Standard 25. The administrative structure established by the local education agency should provide for appropriate school social work supervision.

The local education agency has the responsibility for administrative and technical supervision to ensure high-quality services. Supervisors of school social work programs should be credentialed and experienced MSW school social workers.

Special provisions for social work supervision are indicated for inexperienced school social workers in certain areas in which one or few such social workers serve an entire local education agency.

Standard 26. The local education agency should employ school social workers with the highest level of qualification for entry-level practitioners.

A master of social work (MSW) degree from a CSWE-accredited program is the recommended entry-level qualification for school social work and is required for the NASW School Social Work Specialist credential. When the school social work staff includes some persons whose highest degree is a bachelor of social work (BSW) degree and others who have an MSW, tasks shall be assigned differentially in a manner that takes into account the staff's levels of education and demonstrated competence. Both BSW and MSW staff members should be given the opportunity to use and extend their competence to the fullest.

Standard 27. A local education agency's classification and salary schedule should provide for school social workers' positions and salaries at a level appropriate to their education, experience, and responsibilities. Classifications and salaries should be formulated by procedures that are consistent with those of similarly qualified professional personnel of the local education agency.

School social workers with MSW degrees should be paid within an administrative salary schedule that is warranted by their education, experience, and responsibilities. Procedures used in setting school social workers' salaries must be fair and responsive to the particular level of education, experience, and responsibilities of the school social work staff.

Standard 28. The local education agency should provide a work setting that permits social workers to use their competencies effectively.

School social workers need basic work resources to ensure privacy and confidentiality to children and families and to be most effective in their work. These basic resources include an

office with a telephone; clerical support; an adequate budget for professional materials, supplies, and activities; and adequate private facilities in each school site for meeting (individually and in small groups) with children, families, and personnel of the local education agency.

Standard 29. The local education agency should provide opportunities for social work staff to engage in a program of social work in-service training and staff development.

Local education agencies should provide opportunities for the school social work staff to develop, implement, and participate in in-service training, staff development, and leadership activities.

Staff-development opportunities are particularly important for social workers in local education agencies whose work situations require a considerable degree of self-regulated practice. The opportunity for staff development both within and outside the local education agency can be offered in a variety of ways, including staff workshops with leaders from social work and related disciplines, a reasonable number of days off to attend or lead meetings that offer a means of extending skills and learning new ones, and leaves for continuing education.

Standard 30. The goals, objectives, and tasks of a school social work program should be clearly and directly related to the mission of the local education agency, the educational process, and the use of educational opportunities by children.

School social workers must anticipate and adapt to the constant changes and restructuring that are prevalent in education. They should take a proactive role in the local education agency's reform and restructuring initiatives.

School social work programs and activities must respond to emerging educational trends that stress prevention, early intervention, school readiness, parent education, and service integration for children from birth through secondary education.

Standard 31. All school social work programs, new or long standing, should be evaluated on an ongoing basis to determine their relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and contributions to the process of educating children.

Through the ongoing evaluation of their program, members of the school social work staff demonstrate the program's accountability to the population served, the educational system, the public, and the standards and ethics of the social work profession.

The method used in program evaluation should be reassessed periodically. When indicated, consultation should be sought to improve the setting of objectives related to children's problems, the identification of appropriate tasks to be performed to meet those objectives, and the measuring of the outcomes of the service.

Staff reporting forms and other ways of record-keeping should be reviewed periodically to ensure that they are consonant with the tasks performed. The school social worker must establish a clear and rational basis for selecting a method of program evaluation.

Standard 32. Each state department of education should employ a state school social work consultant who is a credentialed and experienced MSW school social worker.

The state school social work consultant is responsible for

1. advocating for the inclusion of school social work programs and services at the local level;
2. influencing legislative and regulatory efforts related to education;
3. providing technical assistance to local educational agencies in the development and implementation of school social work programs;
4. ensuring that school social work programs are integrated with other school programs statewide;
5. providing leadership and technical assistance in the development of standards and certification for school social workers;
6. collaborating with other service programs within the department of education; and
7. representing their state in regional, state, and national activities related to school social work.

Standard 33. The local education agency should establish and implement a school social worker–student population ratio to ensure reasonable work load expectations.

The National Council of State Consultants for School Social Work Services has recommended school social worker–student population ratios that are presented in Appendix A.

Appendix A

Recommended School Social Worker–Student Population Ratios

Appropriate ratios for school social work staff to students depend on the characteristics of the student population to be served. Each educational agency, state or local, must determine what is adequate for its particular circumstances. The ratios presented here are intended to serve as a guide to educational agencies as they consider work load standards. The following table was adapted from information developed by the National Council of State Consultants for School Social Work Services.

School Social Worker/Student Population Ratio	School Population Served	Effective Levels of Service
1:2,000	Total school population with no special concentration	Crisis intervention Social developmental assessment
1:1,500	Total school population with poverty concentration	Crisis intervention Social developmental assessment Teacher consultation Outside agency referral
1:1,000	Total school population with special education concentration	Social developmental assessment Teacher consultation Crisis intervention Outside agency referral Home–school–community liaison Staff in-service training School social work program planning and evaluation
1:800	Total school population with special education and poverty concentrations	Social developmental assessment Teacher consultation Crisis intervention Outside agency referral Educational system assessment and program development Home–school–community liaison Staff in-service training School social work program planning and evaluation
1:500	Total school population with special education, poverty, and minority concentrations	Social developmental assessment Teacher consultation Crisis intervention Educational system assessment and program development Outside agency referral Home–school–community liaison Staff in-service training

(continued)

School Social Worker/Student Population Ratio	School Population Served	Effective Levels of Service
1:500 (continued)		Large group (classroom) intervention Ongoing intervention School social work program planning and evaluation
1:350	Total school population with special education, poverty, and minority concentrations and federal impact issues	Social developmental assessment Teacher consultation Crisis intervention Educational system assessment and program development Outside agency referral Home–school–community liaison Staff in-service training Large group (classroom) intervention Ongoing intervention Ongoing parent groups School social work program planning and evaluation Research Interdisciplinary teaming
1:50	Special education assignment only	Social developmental assessment Teacher consultation Development and implementation of objectives for the Individualized Education Program (IEP) Crisis intervention Educational system assessment and program development Outside agency referral Home–school–community liaison Staff in-service training Large group (classroom) intervention In-depth intervention Ongoing parent groups School social work program planning and evaluation Research Interdisciplinary teaming Mediation and due process activities

Appendix B

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities Areas and Job Dimensions

In 1988 Educational Testing Service (ETS) of Princeton, New Jersey, conducted a job analysis of entry level school social worker responsibilities. This was done to identify the knowledge necessary for successful job performance and to provide the basis for a national school social work credential.

From this job analysis was developed a listing of Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities areas (KSAs) and Job Dimensions (JDs) that served as a guide for the development of the national school social work examination. A listing of these KSAs and JDs is provided here.

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities Areas

1. Social Work Ethics
2. Program Development and Management Skills
3. Social Work Modalities and Procedures
4. Theories of Human Behavior and Development
5. Models of School Social Work Practice
6. Multidisciplinary Activities
7. Characteristics of Pupil Populations
8. Public-Education Legislation, Case Law, and Due Process

Job Dimensions

1. Relationship and Services to Children and Families
2. Relationship and Services to Teachers and School Staff
3. Services to Other School Personnel
4. Administrative and Professional Tasks
5. Interagency Collaboration, Prevention, and Advocacy

For a detailed report of this study, refer to
A Job Analysis of School Social Workers (1990)
Catherine Nelson, PhD
School and Higher Education Programs
Educational Testing Service
Princeton, NJ 08541

Appendix C

Glossary of Terms

The following terms are here defined for purposes of this document.

Case management—Organizing, coordinating, and sustaining activities designed to optimize the functioning of children and/or families.

Credentialed school social worker—A social worker meeting the requirements for a school social worker as established by the National Association of Social Workers' School Social Work Specialist credential.

Cultural competence—Congruent behaviors, attitudes, and skills enabling one to work effectively in cross-cultural situations.

Ecological perspective—The perspective of the interaction of the child and family and their environment.

Family—The parent, guardian, custodian, or other person acting in loco parentis of a child.

Local education agency—The local public agency responsible for operating the educational program. In some states, responsibility for provision of special education programs has been assigned to entities called intermediate units, area education agencies, educational service units, and so forth.

School social work—Social work services provided in the setting of an educational agency by credentialed school social workers.

Student—Any person of legal school age enrolled or eligible to be enrolled in an educational program. For purposes of this document, students are referred to as children.

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Code of Ethics

SUMMARY OF MAJOR PRINCIPLES

I. The Social Worker's Conduct and Comportment as a Social Worker

A. *Propriety.* The social worker should maintain high standards of personal conduct in the capacity or identity as social worker.

B. *Competence and Professional Development.* The social worker should strive to become and remain proficient in professional practice and the performance of professional functions.

C. *Service.* The social worker should regard as primary the service obligation of the social work profession.

D. *Integrity.* The social worker should act in accordance with the highest standards of professional integrity.

E. *Scholarship and Research.* The social worker engaged in study and research should be guided by the conventions of scholarly inquiry.

II. The Social Worker's Ethical Responsibility to Clients

F. *Primacy of Clients' Interests.* The social worker's primary responsibility is to clients.

G. *Rights and Prerogatives of Clients.* The social worker should make every effort to foster maximum self-determination on the part of clients.

H. *Confidentiality and Privacy.* The social worker should respect the privacy of clients and hold in confidence all information obtained in the course of professional service.

I. *Fees.* When setting fees, the social worker should ensure that they are fair, reasonable, considerate, and commensurate with the service performed and with due regard for the clients' ability to pay.

III. The Social Worker's Ethical Responsibility to Colleagues

J. *Respect, Fairness, and Courtesy.* The social worker should treat colleagues with respect, courtesy, fairness, and good faith.

K. *Dealing with Colleagues' Clients.* The social worker has the responsibility to relate to the clients of colleagues with full professional consideration.

IV. The Social Worker's Ethical Responsibility to Employers and Employing Organizations

L. *Commitments to Employing Organizations.* The social worker should adhere to commitments made to the employing organizations.

V. The Social Worker's Ethical Responsibility to the Social Work Profession

M. *Maintaining the Integrity of the Profession.* The social worker should uphold and advance the values, ethics, knowledge, and mission of the profession.

N. *Community Service.* The social worker should assist the profession in making social services available to the general public.

O. *Development of Knowledge.* The social worker should take responsibility for identifying, developing, and fully utilizing knowledge for professional practice.

VI. The Social Worker's Ethical Responsibility to Society

P. *Promoting the General Welfare.* The social worker should promote the general welfare of society.

This summary is of the NASW Code of Ethics, effective July 1, 1980, as adopted by the 1979 NASW Delegate Assembly and revised by the 1990 Delegate Assembly. The complete text, including the preamble and expanded definitions of principles, is available on request.

About NASW

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) is the largest organization of professional social workers in the world. As of June 1992, over 138,000 members participated in 55 chapters throughout the United States, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and the international community.

The association works to enhance the professional growth and development of its members, to create and maintain professional standards, and to advance sound social policies. NASW provides a variety of membership benefits including credentials (Academy of Certified Social Workers, Academy of Certified Baccalaureate Social Workers, the Qualified Clinical Social Worker, and the School Social Work Specialist) and insurance (professional liability, health, and life). The NASW Press, which produces *Social Work* and the *NASW News* as membership benefits as well as three other journals and several books each year, is a major service in professional development. In January 1991, the association released a major proposal for National Health Care, a single-payer system.

For more information on NASW membership or programs, write NASW, 750 First Street, NE, Suite 700, Washington, DC 20002-4241 (telephone: 1-800-638-8799 or 1-202-408-8600).